

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 SR-02 ORM-03 IO-13 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SS-15

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APPROVED BY: EUR:JAARMITAGE

EUR/SOV:JMATLOCK EUR/EE:JABAKER (IN DRAFT)

S/R/ORM:OTRUEWORTHY (PHONE)

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O R 211736Z JUL 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI IMMEDIATE

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 143931

C O R R E C T E D COPY (OMISSION IN PARA 3 1ST LINE OF TEXT)

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FI, UR

SUBJECT: BALTIC REFUGEE HELD BY FINLAND

REF: OWENS-AUBERT TELECON

1. ACCORDING TO UPI STORY DATED HELSINKI JULY 20, PERSON IDENTIFIED AS 25-YEAR-OLD LITHUANIAN CITIZEN WAS PICKED UP IN ROWBOAT ON BALTIC SEA BY FINNISH FREIGHTER JULY 16. REPORT DESCRIBED HIM AS REFUGEE SEEKING TO REACH WEST GERMANY, AND SAID GOF INTENDS TO RETURN HIM TO USSR.

2. ACCORDING TO SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY EMBASSY HELSINKI, REFUGEE IS VIKTOR SCHNEIDER, AN ESTONIAN WHO HAS BEEN RESIDING IN LITHUANIA. FURTHER, FRG EMBASSY IN HELSINKI IS REPORTEDLY ATTEMPTING TO DETERMINE IF
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SCHNEIDER IS ETHNIC GERMAN.

3. EMBASSY SHOULD SEEK TODAY APPOINTMENT WITH APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF GOF FOREIGN MINISTRY TO INDICATE HUMANITARIAN INTEREST OF USG IN FATE OF SCHNEIDER, AND TO EXPRESS OUR CONCERN THAT HE NOT BE RETURNED TO SOVIETS IN VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 33 OF U.N. PROTOCOL RELATING TO STATUS OF REFUGEES, WHICH FINLAND HAS SIGNED.

YOU SHOULD EXPRESS WILINGNESS OF USG TO BE OF ASSISTANCE IN THIS CASE, AND STATE THAT IF ASYLUM IN WESTERN EUROPE NOT POSSIBLE, USG

PREPARED TO CONSIDER SEEKING HIS PAROLE INTO U.S. IF HE SO DESIRES.

4. IN TALKING WITH FINNISH OFFICIALS, YOU SHOULD STRESS HIGH DEGREE OF INTEREST ON PART OF U.S. PUBLIC TOWARDS STATUS OF REFUGEES FROM USSR. FURTHER, YOU MAY WISH TO POINT OUT THAT RETURN OF SCHNEIDER TO SOVIET UNION WOULD UNFAVORABLY AFFECT FINNISH IMAGE OF NEUTRALITY IN U.S. AND WESTERN EUROPE, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF FACT THAT FINLAND SIGNATORY TO U.N. REFUGEE CONVENTION.

5. FOR USMISSION GENEVA: SINCE FINLAND PARTY TO U.N. CONVENTION AND PROTOCOL RELATING TO STATUS OF REFUGEES, YOU SHOULD ASK UNHCR TO USE GOOD OFFICES TO PREVENT SCHNEIDER'S RETURN TO USSR. RUSH

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